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*Policy Support  
7/1/77  
Agency*

22 March 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Science & Technology

SUBJECT : Foreign-Language Support for Agency Offices

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1. This memorandum suggests the management of Agency foreign-language skills as an appropriate issue for EAG discussion. You may recall that I brought this up with you the evening you spent with us [redacted]

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2. Agency professional language assets are now widely scattered under uncoordinated, decentralized management. The core of the problem is rational use of limited Agency resources in highly sophisticated translating and audio skills especially with respect to scarce languages and substantive disciplines. People operational or even trainable in many of these skills are hard to come by. With each component fending for itself, competitive Agency time and money are inevitably expended in linguist recruitment, training, and professional development.

3. This directly affects FBIS. Our Staff linguists collect intelligence information from foreign publications as a service of common concern (DCID 2/4), but they also serve as a pool providing foreign-language support to Agency offices on request [redacted]. Conflicting demands placed on our linguist resources by these dual functions have created a growing management problem. We have lost a number of linguist positions in recent years. Filling unpredictable requests by other components for language support consumes an average of some 20 FBIS man years annually. Such Agency needs are invariably met at the expense of press exploitation. Yet our collection from foreign publications is used more and more in finished intelligence, and it is an FY 1977 DCI objective to maximize overt collection. We must limit our language support to other offices in order to fulfill our collection responsibilities. Indications are that we will have to curtail them still further.

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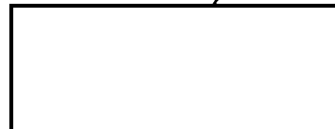
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4. This prompts other offices to add linguist positions to meet sometimes transitory needs for specialized language support. We believe this course does not always serve the Agency's interests. Rather we see a move in the opposite direction as the more viable and cost-effective for the Agency. FBIS would be the logical place in which to recruit, train, and maintain a flexible cadre of Staff language specialists to meet Agency requirements for special language skills as they arise. FBIS would use such officers in its ongoing press exploitation and translation programs, making them available to meet requirements by other components on a detail or rotation basis. This would require the pooling of additional positions in FBIS and joint planning to meet future requirements.

5. I recommend that this suggestion be brought before the EAG, with a proposal that the feasibility of developing a centrally managed linguist reserve be studied during FY 1978. If this approach is deemed feasible, it could be taken into account in the FY 1980 program plan.



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Director  
Foreign Broadcast Information Service

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